

A BOY I KNEW.

BY LAURENCE HUTTON.

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III.

ALL The Boy's religious training was received at home; and almost his first text-book was "The Shorter Catechism," which, he confesses, he hated with all his little might. He had to learn and recite the answers to those long questions as soon as he could recite at all; and, for years, without the slightest knowledge as to what it was all about. Even to this day he cannot tell just what "Effectual Calling," or "Justification," is; and I am sure that he shed more tears over "Effectual Calling" than would blot out the record of any number of infantile sins. He made up his youthful mind that if he could not be saved without "Effectual Calling"—whatever that was—he did not want to be saved at all. But he has thought better of it since.

His earliest visit to Scotland was made when he was but four or five years of age, and long before he had assumed the dignity of trousers, or had been sent to school. His father had gone to the old home at St. Andrews hurriedly, upon the receipt of the news of the serious illness of The Boy's grandmother, who died before they reached her. Naturally, The Boy has little recollection of that sad month of December, spent in his grandfather's house, except that it *was* sad. The weather was cold and wet; the house, even under ordinary circumstances, could not have been a very cheerful one for a youngster who had no companions of his own age. It looked out upon the German Ocean—which at that time of the year was always in a rage, or in the sulks, and the house was called "Peep o' Day," because it received the very first rays of the sun as he rose upon the British Isles.

The Boy's chief amusement was the feeding of "flour-scones" and oat-cakes to an old goat

that lived in the neighborhood, and the daily walks with his grandfather, who seemed to find some little comfort and entertainment in his grandson's childish prattle. He was then almost the only grandchild, and the old man was very proud of his manner and appearance, and particularly amused at certain gigantic efforts on The Boy's part to adapt his own short legs to the strides of his senior's long ones.

After they had interviewed the goat, and had watched the wrecks with which the wild shore was strewn, and had inspected the castle in ruins, and the ruins of the cathedral, The Boy would gaze upon his grandmother's new-made grave, and his own name in full—a common name in the family—upon the family tomb in the old kirkyard; all of which must have been very cheering to The Boy, although he could not read it for himself. And then, which was better, they would stand hand in hand for a long time in front of a candy-shop window, in which was displayed a little regiment of lead soldiers, marching in double file toward an imposing and unconquerable lead fortress on the heights of barley-sugar. Of this spectacle they never tired; and they used to discuss how The Boy would arrange them if they belonged to him, with a sneaking hope on The Boy's part that, some day, they were to be his very own.

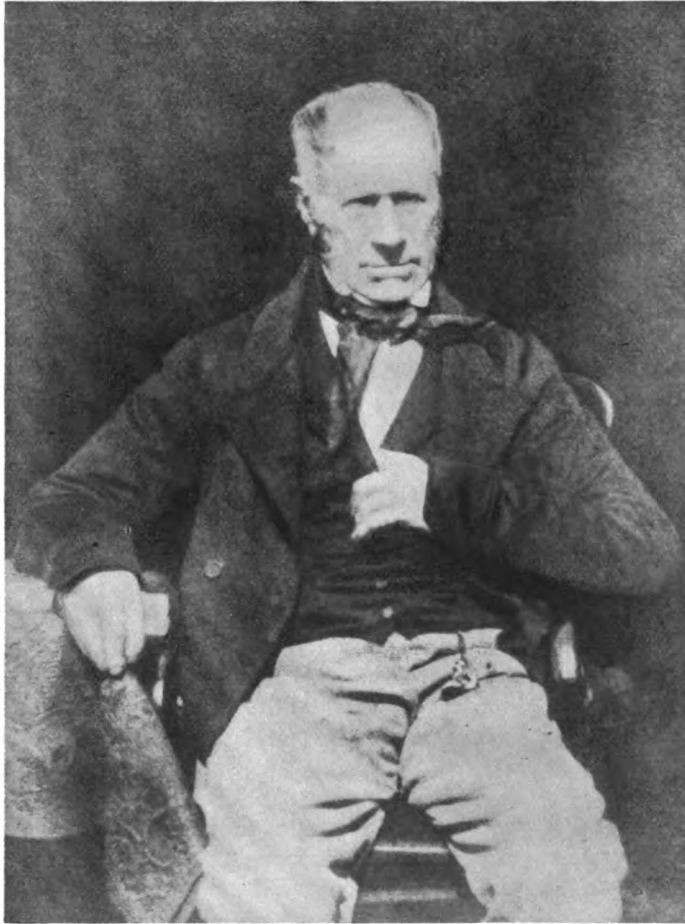
At the urgent request of the grandfather, the American contingent remained in St. Andrews until the end of the year; and The Boy still remembers vividly, and he will never forget, the dismal failure of "Auld Lang Syne" as sung by the family with clasped hands as the clock struck and the New Year began. He sat up for the occasion—or, rather, was waked up for the occasion; and of all that family group he has been, for a decade or more, the only survivor. The mother of the house was but lately dead, the eldest son and his son were going the next day to the other side of the world; and every

voice broke before the familiar verse came to an end.

As The Boy went off to his bed he was told that his grandfather had something for him, and he stood at his knee to receive—a Bible! That it was to be the lead soldiers and the lead

This outburst upon the part of a child who could not read at all, gave unqualified pleasure to the grandfather, and he never tired of telling the story as long as he lived.

The Boy was never a regular member of any fire-company, but almost as long as the



THE BOY'S SCOTCH GRANDFATHER.

old Volunteer Fire Department existed, he was what was known as a "Runner." He was attached, in a sort of brevet way, to "Pearl Hose No. 28," and later to "Eleven Hook and Ladder." He knew all the fire districts into which the city was then divided; his ear was always alert, even in the St. John's Park days, for the sound of the alarm bell, and he ran to every fire, at any hour of the day or night, up to ten o'clock P. M. He did not do much when he got to the fire but stand around and "holler." But once—a proud moment—he helped steer the hook-and-ladder truck to a false alarm in Macdougall Street; and once—a very proud moment indeed—he went into a tenement house, near Dr. Thompson's church, in Grand Street, and carried two negro babies downstairs in his arms. There was no earthly reason why the babies should not have been left in their beds, and the colored family did not like it, because the babies caught cold! But

citadel he never for a moment doubted; and the surprise and disappointment were very great. He seems to have had presence of mind enough to conceal his feelings, and to kiss and thank the dear old man for his gift. But, as he climbed slowly up the stairs, in front of his mother, and with his Bible under his arm, she overheard him sob to himself and murmur, in his great disgust: "Well, he has given me a book. And I wonder how he thinks I am going to read his confounded Scotch!"

The Boy, for once in his life, tasted the delights of self-conscious heroism.

When The Boy, as a bigger boy, was not running to fires he was going to theaters, the greater part of his allowance being spent in the box-offices of Burton's Chambers Street house, of Brougham's Lyceum, corner of Broome Street and Broadway, of Niblo's, and of Castle Garden. There were no afternoon performances in those days, except now and then when the "Ravels" were at Castle Garden; and

the admission to pit and galleries was usually two shillings—otherwise, twenty-five cents. His first play, so far as he remembers, was "The Stranger," a play dismal enough to destroy any taste for the drama, one would suppose, in any juvenile mind. He never cared very much to see "The Stranger" again, but nothing that was a play was too deep or too heavy for him. He never saw the end of any of the more elaborate productions, unless his father took him to the theater (as once in a while he did), for it was a strict rule of the house, until The Boy was well up in his teens, that he must be in by ten o'clock. His father did not ask him where he was going, or where he had been; but the curfew in Hubert Street tolled at ten. The Boy calculated carefully and exactly how many minutes it took him to run to Hubert Street from Brougham's or from Burton's; and by the middle of the second act his watch—a small silver affair with a hunting-case, in which he could not keep an uncracked crystal—was always in his hand. He never disobeyed his father, and for years he never knew what became of Claude Melnotte after he went to the wars, or if Damon got back in time to save Pythias before the curtain fell. The Boy, naturally, had a most meager notion as to what all these plays were about, but he enjoyed his fragments of them as he rarely enjoys plays now. Sometimes, in these days, when the air is bad, and plays are worse, and big hats are worse than either, he wishes that he were forced to leave the modern play-house at nine-forty-five on pain of no supper that night, or of twenty lines of "Virgil" the next day.

On very stormy afternoons the boys played theater in the large garret of The Boy's Hubert Street house; a convenient closet, with a door and a window, serving for the Castle of Elsinore in "Hamlet," for the gun-room of the ship in "Black-eyed Susan," or for the studio of Phidias in "The Marble Heart," as the case might be. "The Brazilian Ape," as requiring more action than words, was a favorite entertainment, only they all wanted to play Jocko the Ape; and they would have made no little success out of the "Lady of Lyons" if any of them had been willing to play Pauline. Their costumes and properties were slight and not al-

ways accurate, but they could "launch the curse of Rome," and describe "two hearts beating as one," in a manner rarely equaled on the regular stage. The only thing they really lacked was an audience, neither Lizzie Gustin nor Ann Hughes ever being willing to sit through more than one act at a time. When The Boy, as Virginius, stabbed all the feathers out of the pillow which represented the martyred Virginia; and, when Joe Stuart, as Falstaff, broke the bottom out of Ann Hughes's clothes-basket, the license was revoked, and the season came to an untimely end.

Until the beginning of the weekly, or the fortnightly, sailings of the Collins Line of steamers from the foot of Canal Street (a spectacle which they never missed in any weather), Joe Stuart, Johnny Robertson, and The Boy played "Deerslayer" every Saturday in the back-yard of The Boy's house. The area-way was Glimmer-glass, in which they fished, and on which they canoed; the back-stoop was Muskrat Castle; the rabbits were all the wild beasts of the forest; Johnny was Hawk-Eye, The Boy



JOE STUART.

was Harry Hurry, and Joe Stuart was Chingachgook. They talked what they fondly believed was the dialect of the Delaware tribe, and they were constantly on the lookout for the ap-

proaches of Rivenoak, or the Panther, who were represented by any member of the family who chanced to stray into the inclosure. They



THE BOY AS VIRGINIUS.

carefully turned their toes in when they walked, making so much effort in this matter that it took a great deal of dancing-school to get their feet back to the "first position" again, and they even painted their faces when they were on the war-path. The rabbits had the worst of it!

The campaign came to a sudden and disastrous conclusion when the hostile tribes, headed by Mrs. Robertson, descended in force upon the devoted band, because Chingachgook broke one of Hawk-Eye's front teeth with an arrow, aimed at the biggest of the rabbits, which was crouching by the side of the roots of the grape-vine, and playing that he was a panther of enormous size.

Johnny Robertson and The Boy had one great superstition — to wit, Cracks! For some now inexplicable reason they thought it unlucky to step on cracks; and they made daily and hourly spectacles of themselves in the streets by the eccentric irregularity of their gait. Now they would take long strides, like a

pair of ostriches, and now short, quick steps, like a couple of robins; now they would hop on both feet, like a brace of sparrows; now they would walk on their heels, now on their toes; now with their toes turned in, now with their toes turned out—at right angles, in a splay-footed way; now they would walk with their feet crossed, after the manner of the hands of very fancy, old-fashioned piano-players, skipping from base to treble—over cracks. The whole performance would have driven a sensitive drill-sergeant or ballet-master to distraction. And when they came to a brick sidewalk they would go all around the block to avoid it. They could cross Hudson Street on the cobblestones with great effort, and in great danger of being run over; but they could not possibly travel upon a brick pavement and avoid the cracks. What would have happened to them if they *did* step on a crack they did not exactly know. But, for all that, they never stepped on cracks — of their own free will.



"MRS. ROBERTSON DESCENDED IN FORCE UPON THE DEVOTED BAND."

(To be continued)